# EPI Update for Friday, January 11, 2013 Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) lowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

# Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- Comparing this flu season to previous seasons
- Flu vaccine availability in lowa
- Flu strains in lowa are susceptible to antiviral medications
- Eradication of Dracunculiasis and Polio
- Binge drinking in females
- Meeting announcements and training opportunities

## Comparing this flu season to previous seasons

lowa, like the rest of the U.S., is now experiencing high levels of influenza activity. Compared to typical influenza seasons in the past, this year started one-to-two months earlier. The number of hospitalizations and the percent of patients going to clinics for flu-like symptoms is already three times higher than these typical years, and the peak of activity is not expected for several more weeks.

This season, the predominant strain of flu in lowa is A (H3N2) viruses (85 percent of confirmed viruses). To review the entire weekly flu report visit: <a href="https://www.idph.state.ia.us/IdphArchive/Archive.aspx?channel=FluReports">www.idph.state.ia.us/IdphArchive/Archive.aspx?channel=FluReports</a>. (Posted each Friday in the early afternoon.)

#### Flu vaccine availability in lowa

While supplies of influenza vaccine remains adequate, spot shortages are being reported in lowa.

As of Thursday, January 10, the *Vaccines for Children* and *Immunization* programs have nearly 2,800 doses of influenza vaccine still available on a first-come, first-served basis. This vaccine is for use in VFC eligible children ages six months through 18 years. If interested in obtaining doses, please contact Tina Patterson at (800) 831-6293, Ext 4 as soon as possible.

#### Flu strains in lowa are susceptible to antiviral medications

The currently circulating influenza viruses in Iowa are susceptible to the neuraminidase inhibitor antiviral medications oseltamivir and zanamivir; however, rare sporadic cases of oseltamivir-resistant 2009 H1N1 and A (H3N2) viruses have been detected worldwide.

Antiviral treatment with oseltamivir or zanamivir is recommended as early as possible for patients with confirmed or suspected influenza who have severe, complicated, or progressive illness; who require hospitalization; or who are at greater risk for serious influenza-related complications. Additional information on recommendations for treatment and chemoprophylaxis of influenza virus infection with antiviral agents is available at <a href="www.cdc.gov/flu/antivirals/index.htm">www.cdc.gov/flu/antivirals/index.htm</a>.

#### **Eradication of Dracunculiasis and Polio**

Since the eradication of smallpox in 1977, two other diseases have been targeted for eradication: Dracunculiasis (Guinea worm disease) and Polio. Despite success in greatly reducing the geographical distribution of these diseases over the past 30 years, they still occur in a few African and Asian countries. Originally it was hoped that both of these diseases would be eradicated by now, but political instability and difficulty in reaching remote undeveloped areas has made this goal elusive. Many charities have helped fund these efforts as they near the eradication goal, notably: former President Jimmy Carter and the Carter Center, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, WHO, CDC, UNICEF and Rotary International, among others.

A discussion of the difference between disease eradication and elimination will be included in next week's EPI Update.

# Binge drinking in females

Binge drinking (five alcoholic drinks for men in one setting, four for women) rates are highest in northern Midwest states. Iowa ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation in binge drinking, with over 28 percent of adults binge drinking at least once a month. A recent report highlighted the risks of binge drinking in women. One-in-eight women and one-in-five high school girls binge drink, increasing their risk for breast cancer, heart disease, STDs, and unintended pregnancy.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends that clinicians screen and counsel patients in primary care settings to reduce alcohol misuse by teens and adults, including pregnant women. To access the entire report, visit: <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/features/vitalsigns/bingedrinkingfemale/index.html">www.cdc.gov/features/vitalsigns/bingedrinkingfemale/index.html</a>.

## Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Save the Date: The Iowa Immunization Program is planning the 2013 Immunization Conference for June 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> to be held in Des Moines. Registration details to come!

## Have a healthy and happy (and flu-free) week!

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